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THE MONTANA ROUNDUP OF INDUSTRIAL HEALTH BRIEFS

Montana State Board of Health
P. K. Kilbourne, M.D., Executive Officer

Division of Industrial Hygiene
Dohrman H. Byers, Director

July - August, 1946 Helena, Montana Vol. 2, No. 4

NEW DIRECTOR

On September 1, 1946, Mr. Paul M. Giever will assume the duties of his new position as Director of the Montana Industrial Hygiene Division. Mr. Giever is a native westerner and received his degree from the South Dakota School of Mines. He has had some years of experience in hard rock mining in Colorado as a mining engineer and as an industrial hygiene engineer for a large mining company. With the outbreak of the war, the army took him, but, recognizing his training and abilities, they placed him in a responsible industrial hygiene position for his entire service. Since receiving his discharge early this year, he has been with the California Division of Industrial Hygiene from whence he comes to us.

We, of the Montana Board of Health, feel that in Mr. Giever we have a man whose training and capabilities are eminently suited to appreciate and effectively deal with the health hazards in the industries of our state. Receiving from labor and industry the same high degree of cooperation and understanding which has been the joy of the retiring director, Mr. Giever will be able to carry on a program of service in industrial health which will well exceed the past record (of which we are perhaps immodestly proud).

Mr. Byers, who has been serving as Director of the Industrial Hygiene Division since January, 1944, will shortly relinquish these duties and return to Washington, D. C. During his stay in Montana, Mr. Byers has been on loan from the U. S. Public Health Service to the Montana State Board of Health. Upon his return to Washington, he will be reassigned to new duties in the field of industrial hygiene.

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NEW CHEMIST

Mr. Ludwig S. Champa joined the staff of the Industrial Hygiene Division on July 1, 1946. He fills the position of Senior Chemist which was left vacant in June by the resignation of Mr. Hilmer N. Hansen. Mr. Champa has been with the Board of Health for some years having served well and faithfully in the Food and Drug Division and prior to that in the Sanitary Engineering Division. Mr. Champa is well equipped by training and experience to render valuable service in his new position.

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ATTENTION PHYSICIANS

The Wayne University School of Occupational Health, Detroit, Michigan, has announced a course in Occupational Health and Medicine. The various divisions of the course with dates of presentation are as follows:

Administrative Medicine in Industry	September 9 - 21
Preventive Occupational Medicine	September 23 - Nov. 2
Occupational Health	November 4 - 83
The Surgery of Trauma	November 25 - Dec. 7
Rehabilitation	December 9 - 14
Legal-Medical Relations, Workmen's Compensation, Labor Laws, Insurance & Economics	December 16 - 21

The subjects will be presented by outstanding men actively engaged in the various branches of occupational health and medical practice. Full use will be made of unusual facilities offered by industrial plants in the Detroit area.

Full information about this course may be obtained by addressing the Dean, School of Occupational Medicine, 1547 Penobscot Building, Detroit 26, Michigan.

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NOTABLE QUOTE

"You can't control a disease unless you know where it occurs."

These words, spoken by Dr. J. G. Townsend, U. S. Public Health Service, certainly apply in their fullest significance to occupational diseases. This fact was well recognized by the men who wrote that section of Montana Law which established the Industrial Hygiene Division. They provided in this law that all known and suspected cases of occupational diseases should be reported to this Division. It is the duty of this Division to investigate all such reports and to do all within its power to secure the elimination or control of the hazardous situation which produced each case of an occupational disease. These matters are handled in strictest confidence. The Division has no punitive objectives but seeks only to ensure the most healthful working environments possible for the workmen of Montana. It is the obligation of any person having knowledge of any occupational disease cases to report said cases to the Industrial Hygiene Division at Helena.

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AN OPPORTUNITY

Mr. Paul M. Giever, next Director of this Division, expects to arrive in Montana in time to attend the Eighth Summer Convention of the Mining Association of Montana in Missoula on August 30 and 31. Operators present at this Convention should avail themselves of the opportunity to meet Mr. Giever and to secure his services on any industrial health problems which they may have.

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"DEAD HANDS" IN USER'S OF VIBRATING TOOLS

Seventy-five out of 300 workers using electrically driven pneumatic tools developed vascular disturbances in the hand. The trouble begins with sudden blanching and "deadness" of one or more fingers; the thumb is not affected. This is followed after a variable interval by a deep cyanosis; later this cyanotic area becomes mottled with salmon-colored patches which gradually spread and coalesce until the fingers are more red than before. The duration of the attack varies from a few minutes to several hours. In more severe cases, there is a tendency for the "white stage" to become shorter in successive attacks, and sometimes to disappear altogether. The workers complain of aching of the hand in both the white and the cyanotic stages, and often of unpleasant tingling in the red recovery stage. The hand is useless during the attacks; this causes serious disability, especially if the attacks are of long duration or increase in length. The condition may persist after the man has given up work with the pneumatic tool.

The onset of this condition ranged from 6 months to 40 months' work with pneumatic tools of high speeds (2900 r.p.m.). Young workers developed this syndrome just as soon as older workers. The distribution of the cyanosis showed some variation, according to the way the tool was held. The ring finger was most commonly and severely affected; the middle finger, index finger and little finger were next affected in order of decreasing severity.

The use of tools with a speed of under 2000 r.p.m. and of sharp cutting instruments when hard metal is cut would diminish the incidence of "dead hand". If high speed tools must be used on hard metals, the prevention of this condition is difficult. Working shorter hours would postpone but not prevent the onset of the condition. The authors suggest that the best method would be not to employ the workers on the same type of work for more than nine months.--Telford et al Lancet, Sept. 1945 (Missouri Industrial Health Bulletin)

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PLASTICS

In spoken workd and printed article, this day has been heralded as the threshold of the "Plastic Age" for civilization. Extravagant as some of these predictions may be, the idea is not without a basis in fact. Within the past several years, the number of plastics and their uses have increased by leaps and bounds. Happily for us, most plastics in their final form are practically inert physiologically. Not so happily for the workers in the plastic industries; many of the raw materials of plastics are quite toxic. Phenol, formaldehyde, vinyl chloride, vinylidene chloride, and other basic ingredients may present serious health problems if improperly handled. Certain plastics when not completely reacted may contain some skin sensitizers in sufficient strength to produce a contact dermatitis in the unwary workman. The dust from some plastics can be injurious when inhaled or when coming in contact with a hot, sweaty skin.

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Fortunately, the health hazards from most plastic manufacturing and fabricating operations can be controlled by simple, well-known methods. Proper general and local exhaust ventilation can reduce exposures to vapors and dusts to non-injurious levels.

Good housekeeping and care in personal cleanliness are effective controls of the hazards from skin contact with irritating or sensitizing substances. The evaluation of health hazards from plastics and the recommending of proper control methods is but another service of the Industrial Hygiene Division.

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FAREWELL

Grasping my last opportunity to do so, I wish to drop the editorial "we" and send a completely personal message to you readers. To the many individuals who have given me such wholehearted and courteous cooperation in the discharge of my duties, I wish to express my unlimited appreciation. Your intelligent and enlightened attitude toward industrial health problems has contributed to a successful program in far greater measure than any efforts of mine. To those who have received the "Roundup" with attentive interest, I give my sincere thanks for your encouragement. To all the good people of Montana, I make grateful acknowledgement for your unfailing hospitality and generosity. Whatever time and distance may intervene, I shall always feel a close affiliation with the industrial hygiene program of Montana.

---Dohrman H. Byers

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Ten little workmen, all feeling fine

One forgot his mask, then there were nine!

Nine little workmen, without ventilation to date

Too much carbon tet, then there were eight.

Eight little workmen, not earning a dime,

Industrial Hygiene could save this lost time!

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